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*The Faith of the weakest Believer as precious
as the Faith of the strongest.*

CONSIDER'D and PROV'D,

IN A

S E R M O N

Preached from the Second Epistle of St. Peter,
Chap. i. and middle Part of Ver. 1,

— *To them that have obtained like precious
Faith with us,* —

Publish'd principally for their Use and Comfort
who are true, but weak Believers.

By NATHANAEL WYLES, of Tarling in Essex.

LUKE xvii. ver. 19.

Thy Faith hath made thee whole.

1 PETER i. ver. 7.

*The Trial of your Faith, being much more
precious than of Gold that perisheth, &c.*

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IF *this* SERMON *meets with* Acceptance, the AUTHOR intends to add another to it, from LUKE xvii chap. former Part of the 19th ver.

Thy Faith hath made thee whole. —

May the good LORD grant His Blessing upon this DISCOURSE, for the Establishment and Comfort of weak, but true Believers; together with the Edification of Others who may read it, both which, are the Desire and Design of the Author.



2 Ep. St. PETER, chap. i. part of ver. 1.

— *To them that have obtained like precious Faith with us.*



S the former Clause of this Verse acquaints us with the Penman of this Epistle, who is there describ'd by his *Name*, and by his high *Office and Honour*, Simon Peter, *a Servant and an Apostle of Jesus Christ*, so (in the Words now before us) we have *an Account* to whom he wrote this Epistle, with the great *Honour* that *was done them*; and thus there are two Things *observable* in them, as,

First, The Persons to whom he wrote it, and they were the *Jews*, whom he calls (in his *first Epistle*, ch. i. ver. 1.) Strangers of the *Dispersion*, being scatter'd throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. He that thus banish'd them, was *Claudius* the Emperor, as we read in *Acts* xviii. ver. 2.

Secondly, Here is further observable, the *great Honour* which was conferr'd upon those dispers'd Jews, and consequently the happy Condition they were in, with respect to their Souls; this

is contain'd and express'd in these Words, *ye have obtained like precious Faith with us*, as he had before told them in the Beginning of this first Epistle, *that they were Elect according to the Fore-Knowledge of God the Father, thro' Sanctification of the Spirit, unto Obedience; and Sprinkling of the Blood of Jesus.*

He here writ to *them as such Persons, who, tho' they were scatter'd Abroad*, were sprinkled with the Blood of Jesus, *and sanctified by the Holy Spirit unto Obedience*; and so, as to their spiritual State, they were very happy, *ye have obtained, &c.* tho' ye are dispers'd, yet ye have the same Faith which we have, and so, tho' ye are, as to your outward Condition, Strangers of the Dispersion, being scatter'd Abroad, *yet you may Comfort yourselves with this*, that ye have the same *precious Faith with us*, and so your eternal Salvation is secured. This, no doubt, the Apostle Peter had here in his View, to encourage and comfort their Minds under their Dispersion, that they were under it, as safe for Heaven, as themselves; from whence I would note to you, this comfortable Truth, by the Way, *viz.* That let the outward Condition of real Christians here be very low and afflicting, yet they have this to comfort them, that they are in a good and safe State for a better World, having a true Faith in Christ. If any should object here, if they have Faith in Christ, it is but very small, if compar'd with the Faith of some others, and therefore, they know not how
to

to take Comfort therein; the great Truth contain'd in the Words before us, may and will relieve them in this Case, and that is, that the Faith of the *weakest* Christian, who is so indeed, is as precious a Faith, as that of the *strongest*. The Apostle *Peter*, does not speak here of the same Measure or Degree of Faith with theirs, which is *Strong*, but of the Truth of it, and so he calls it like precious Faith, not for the Greatness and Strength of it, but for the Nature and Truth of it in them he writ this 2d Epistle to.

What I shall do here for the *Comfort and Encouragement of weak, but true Believers, in Pursuance of the Apostle Peter's Design*, shall be, thro' the Assistance of God, *First*, To shew you wherein, or in what Respects, the Faith of the weakest Christian, that is a real Christian, is as precious a Faith as the Faith of the strongest; and then, *Secondly*, Make some Remarks upon what shall have been said.

In the first Place then, I am to consider and shew you, wherein, or in what Respects, the Faith of the weakest Christian, who is a real Christian, is as precious a Faith as the Faith of the strongest, and this I shall set before you, or open to you, *in the Five following Particulars*.

First then, it is thus, with Respect to the Donor of it, and that is God; hence it is call'd the Gift of God; and thus what the Apostle Paul said to the Philippians, in chap. i. ver. 29. may be said to all that have true Faith in Christ,

even the lowest Degree of it, unto you it is given to believe on him; this Grace does not grow in Nature's Garden, or rather Wilderness, nor is it in the Power of a Man, as corrupted, to produce it in himself; nor any other Creature, neither Men nor Angels, but where it is in Truth, it is the Gift of God to them; and because every Degree of it is so, the weakest Faith, may be truly said to be like precious Faith as the strongest, for both are from the same Donor, even God, who is stiled the God of all Grace, 1 Peter v. 10. And because the Faith in Christ, which thou hast, O Christian, is from him, as well as thy other Graces, it should be own'd and priz'd by thee as his Gift, wholly undeserv'd by thee. And because it is not said, that only a strong Faith is the Gift of God, but Faith is so which includes the weakest Faith, as well as the strongest; therefore, those of you whose Faith at present is but weak and small, should look upon it to be as precious, it being his Gift to you, as that which is much greater, or stronger; and tho' you shou'd desire and pray, as the Disciples did, in Luke xvii. 5. Lord, increase our Faith, yet while it is weak, you should regard it as his Gift, and take the Comfort of it; it having Salvation promised to it, for it is not said, that he only who is a strong Believer, shall be sav'd, but he that believes shall be sav'd; Acts xvi. 31.

But Secondly, The Faith of the weakest Believer, is as precious as the Faith of the strongest,

strongest, with respect to the *Objects of it*. Tho' they differ in Degree, yet as they are the same in Nature or Kind, so the Objects of both, are the same, which makes them alike precious. If you ask me, who are the Objects of this Faith, by which the Preciousness of it will appear in the Salvation of Sinners; I answer, they are, first, God the Father in Christ, and secondly, Jesus Christ, God and Man, in our Nature, as the great and only Mediator betwixt him and us. Both these Objects of true Faith we have an Account of in the Holy Scriptures, in the great Business of our Salvation, as in *John* xiv. ver. 1. *Let not your Heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me.* Where our Saviour directed his Disciples, to God his Father, and to himself, as the Objects of their Faith, for the Support and Comfort of their Minds, when he in Person should be taken from them. So in *1. Peter* i. 21. we read of *believing in God by Jesus Christ, who verily was fore ordained before the Foundation of the World.* And of Faith in Christ, as the only begotten Son of God, *by an ineffable Generation*; and as the great God and our Saviour, we frequently read there, as in *John* iii. ver. 15. 16. compared with *Romans* x. from ver. 9. to 13. With a Multitude of other Places which might be quoted. With these two Objects true Faith is concerned, and terminates upon, and so must ours, in order to eternal Life. If you ask, how our Faith must terminate in God the Father, and

and how in Jesus Christ, in this great Business of eternal Salvation? I answer briefly in two Particulars, as *first*, our Faith here must be in God, not merely and only as a Creator, but as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in him, *reconciling Sinners unto himself, not imputing their Trespases unto them*, 2. Cor. v. 19. And *secondly*, in Jesus Christ, as God Man and our only Mediator, by whom we are brought to God, having in our Nature, *made Peace for us, by the Blood of his Cross*, Col. i. 20. *compared with 1 Peter iii. 18. ver.*

God the Father, here, is the reconciled, and Jesus Christ his Son, is the Reconciler. And thus Faith is concern'd with both, as the Objects of it. Hence it is call'd, in *Heb. vi. 1. Faith towards God. And Faith in God by Christ*, as you heard above. *Acts x. 43.* It is call'd, *Faith in Christ*, spoken of in ver. 36. as *Lord of all, and as the Person anointed by God the Father, with the Holy Spirit, and with Power* in our Nature, in ver. 38, through whose Name, or by whose Merit, all that believe in him, do, and shall *receive Remission of Sins.*

Thus must God the Father, and Jesus Christ his Son, be the Objects of our Faith: As he is the eternal Son of God, equal with the Father, as the *Jews* understood him to make himself, when he said, *He was the Son of God, and God was his Father.* JOHN v. 18. So we must believe in him as God, and as the *great God*, as his Character is in *TITUS ii. 13.* and

and as our Faith respects God the Father, as the Sender of this his Son, *in the likeness of sinful Flesh, to condemn, condemning Sin in the Flesh:*

ROMANS viii. 1. So we must believe in him as the Contriver and Appointer of him in our Nature, meant there by Flesh, to be the Procurer, or Purchaser of Pardon, Peace and Life, for us. And if we do not thus believe in, and honour the Son, we do not believe in, nor honour the Father, as he requires, and expects we should do, JOHN v. 23.

Both then you see are the Objects of true Faith in our Salvation, and what a precious Faith must that be, that hath such glorious Objects to fix upon: And this the weakest Faith hath, as well as the strongest, *but with more Fears.*

But *Thirdly*, The Faith of the weakest Believer, is as precious, as of the strongest, *with respect to the Means by which it is wrought in their Hearts.* As Faith is God's Gift, so it is his Work, by his Word and Holy Spirit; where it is in Truth, even the least Degree of it, as well as the greatest. Hence Faith is said, *to come by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God*, ROMANS x. 17. This is the ordinary Means of it, by which the Holy Spirit works it in the Hearts of Persons, who before were Unbelievers: And thus it is said, *to be Faith of the Operation of God*, COL. ii. 12. And in EPH. i. 19, 20. It is call'd, *the exceeding Greatness of his Power to those ward who believe; according to the working of his mighty Power,*
B *which*

which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the Dead, &c.

As it was no small Instance of God's Power to raise Christ from the dead, who had such a Load upon him as our Sins were; so it is no small Discovery of the Almighty Power of God, in the working of Faith in Persons, where there is so much Sin and strong Corruption to hinder it; and were he not to work it, who *is Almighty*, no other Power could effect it. And therefore it is ascrib'd, *to the exceeding greatness of his Power, towards them that believe*; not only Power, but the exceeding Greatness of his Power towards them that believe, in quickening their Hearts thereunto: *Even such a Power as wrought in Christ, when he was raised from the dead*; by which Power he was declar'd *to be the Son of God, according to the Spirit of Holiness*; ROM. i. 4.

And this the Apostle Paul prayed the *Ephesians* might know, and so give him the Glory of the Faith wrought in them; by which he set aside the Sufficiency of moral Swasion, and all the Power, not only of Men, the greatest, the wisest, and the best of them, but of Angels too; for it is beyond their Skill and Power to effect it. This is God's Work, by his Word and Holy Spirit to enable sinful Creatures to believe in Jesus Christ, in JOHN vi. 29. where it is call'd his Work.

It is their Duty to believe, and when they do believe, the Act is theirs, but the Principle whereby

whereby they do this, is from God, by his Holy Spirit, and so it is call'd the *Work of Faith with Power in their Hearts*; his Power and not their own, 2 THESS. ii. 11. *Obj.* But some may say, if Persons where the Gospel is, have not a Power of their own to believe, how can they with Equity be punish'd for their Unbelief: We read indeed that they shall be punish'd, and *that with Damnation*; in MARK xvi. 16. But we want to know the Justice of it, since it is not in their own Power to believe, as the Gospel requires. To this Objection I shall give an Answer, briefly, in three Particulars, which I think will clear God's Justice therein, as,

First, Man originally had a Power to perform what God did or should require of him; but that he lost by sinning against him, ECCLES. vii. 29. And so have we by sinning in Him, as our Federal Head, as we are said to have done, in *Rom.* v. 12. and thus, *we are by Nature Children of Wrath.* EPH. ii. 3.

Secondly, Tho' Man as a rational Creature, may and ought to attend upon the Means by which ordinarily Faith is wrought, as the reading and preaching of the Word, yet being deprav'd by Sin, the Power of his Will to believe is lost, and he is inclin'd to act contrary to what is required of him, and so his Refusal to do as he is required proceeds from that corrupt Inclination.

Thus his Punishment is just, because what he does of this Kind, is with his Will, tho' as corrupted. Our Saviour lays the Cause here, in

JOHN v. 40. *Ye will not come unto me, that is, believe in me, that ye might have Life.* And thus Man's Destruction is of himself, as the Holy Scriptures declare in HOS. xiii. 9. compared with MAT. xxiii. 37, 38. Man, as corrupted, is resolv'd to remain as he is, and to act as he does, and thus he will do till he is overcome by a Power without himself; or as it is express'd in PSALM cx. 3. *'Till he is made willing in the Day of Christ's Power.*

The Will of Man as corrupted by Sin, holds it out against God and Christ in their Exhortations and Precepts in the Word: You may read the Language of it in JER. xlv. 16. *As for the Word of the Lord, which thou hast spoken unto us in his Name, we will not hearken unto thee,* we are resolv'd upon it, and therefore you may spare your Labour for the future; so in LUKE xix. 14. *We will not have this Man, by whom is meant Jesus Christ, to reign over us.* This is the Language of Man's Will, which naturally as deprav'd is like a Garrison, it holds it out against God, and obstinately refuses to bow to Christ's Sceptre till it is subdued and renew'd, or has a new Bias given to it; as we read in ROM. viii. 7. As the Transgression of the Wicked declare, *There is no fear of God before their Eyes.* PSALM xxxvi. 1. So their obstinate Refusals to hearken to the Calls and Invitations of God and Christ in the Word, shew there is no Pliableness in their Wills to do so, till that Obstinacy is remov'd; and thus

those

those that perish, perish by their own Wilfulness, and so what they suffer, is in a Way of Justice. The more of the Will there is in any Crime, the greater the Crime is, and so consequently, the Punishment inflicted upon such Persons, must be just; so it is here. To this I would add,

Thirdly, That their voluntary Refusals proceed, both from their Want of a Principle of Love to God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and from the good Liking or Affection they have to Sin in general, or to some particular Lust or Lusts.

Thus it was with the *Jews*, and *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, which made them oppose our Lord in his Ministry, by which, Pardon and Life were offer'd to them; *ye have not said our Saviour to them, JOHN v. 42. the Love of God in you.* Ye pretend to love him, and to have a great Zeal for his Glory, but this does not appear in your Practice, to oppose and reject me and my Doctrine: For tho' I am come in his Name, and he has born Witness to me as such, by the Works which I have done. Verses 36. 37. Yet you have not received me as sent by him, tho' you say you Love him. Ver. 43. Ye seek Honour one of another, and of Men. This is what ye are ambitious of, and your Hearts are set upon it, and so you cannot believe in me. Ver. 44. From hence it appears, that while Persons are destitute of a true Love to God, and have their Hearts set upon their Lusts and Self, as they do not, so they cannot believe in Christ, for, as true Faith empties a Man of him-

himself, and purges upon his Ambition and Lusts, as Physick does on the Body; and works by Love, so it is an Act of the renew'd Will, and so till that is wrought by the Holy Spirit, it is quite otherwise with him: And thus he will remain without this Change. In a Word, this is the Case, that Men unrenow'd, *love Darknes rather than Light*: And so they will not believe nor practice as the Gospel directs them to do, JOHN iii. 19. Tho' they may shew some liking to the Gospel, for the Benefits of Pardon and Life which it offers to Sinners, yet because it requires the Mortification of the Old Man with his Lusts *thro' the Spirit*, ROM. viii. 13. And that they should *deny all Ungodliness, and worldly Lusts, and live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present World*: Therefore they dislike it, and will not comply with what it thus requires of them; TITUS ii. 11, 12. For the Love they have to their Lusts, they are willing still to retain them, and not to be controul'd, *in making Provision for the Flesh, that they may fulfil the Lusts thereof*: Which they see the putting on of Christ by Faith would keep them from doing. ROM. xii. 13, 14. Now since it is thus, this (I think) clears the Equity of God's Justice, in punishing of them who continue to *neglect the great Salvation of the Gospel*, as it is call'd in HEB. ii. 3. and to reject a Saviour reveal'd and offer'd to them therein.

Because for the Love they have to their Sins, they desire and are resolv'd to retain or keep them

them still : And thus as Persons are render'd incapable by Sin to believe in Christ, this Work must be God's by his Holy Spirit where it is, who works in them, *both to Will, and to do according to his own good Pleasure*, PHIL. ii. 13.

And because all true Gospel FAITH, even the smallest Degree of it, is wrought in their Hearts, by the same Means where it is, it is in this Respect like precious Faith with greatest. But,

Fourthly, Real Christians are by weak Faith interested in the same Persons, Promises, and Privileges, as he that hath the strongest Faith.

First, In the same Persons, as God the Father by Christ, as their God and Father : JOHN xx. 17. And in Jesus Christ as Mediator, and so the *Lord their Righteousness and Strength*, as he is stiled in ISAIAH xlv. 24. And what is there said of him, they all have a Right to say he is to them, the weak as well as the strong, for he is to both *the Lord their Righteousness and Strength*.

As he was cut off to make an End of Sin, and by so doing, to bring in *an everlasting Righteousness for them*, and being thus *made Sin for them, they are made the Righteousness of God in him* : 2 COR. v. 21. So upon this Account, all that believe in him, as the weak do, as well as the strong, are said in ACTS xiii. 39. *to be justified from all Things, from which they could not be justified by the Law of Moses*, nor indeed in no other Way. As Jesus Christ hath *all Fulness dwelling in him*, as Mediator, *so they all out of that Fulness receive Grace for Grace* :

Grace : As Grace for their first Conversion, so after Grace, for their Growth therein. JOHN i. 16. Jesus Christ, with all his Riches and Treasures belong to both of them. *The Gifts of Righteousness and Grace*, which they have receiv'd, are from him : ROM. v. 17. And he now appears in the Presence of his Father, for them in Heaven ; as we read in HEB. ix. 24.

And this is recorded for the Comfort of weak Believers, who are *as little Children* ; as well as for theirs, who are *as strong Men, and Fathers* ; that they have *an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, who is the Propitiation for their Sins*. 1 JOHN ii. 1, 2. And how precious (Sirs) must that Faith be, by which they are interested in so precious and glorious a Person as Jesus Christ is. But

Secondly, They are this Way interested in the same Promises of the Covenant of Grace, which are said to be exceeding great and precious. 2 PET i. 4. They are *great* for Quantity and *precious* for Quality, and they are all theirs by Christ, in whom they believe, and it must be thus, because as none can believe any Promise in a Gospel Way, but by believing in Christ *as Mediator* ; to whom they were made, and by whom they are given to them, who thro' Grace believe in him, being made Partakers of a *divine Nature* ; so they are *ratified or confirmed* by him, to them, *to the Glory of God the Father*, who made them, and to their Comfort and Honour too. In him we read, 2 COR i. 20.

All

All the Promises of God are Yea and Amen. As Jesus Christ as Mediator, is the same in the Promises of God, which are unchangeable; so are all such Promises, touching their Salvation, who do, and shall believe in him. *They are Yea* that is Truth, and *Amen*, that is, Assurance. And it must be thus, because God the Father in the Covenant of Grace, hath made no Promises but in Christ, neither does he perform any but in and by him: And thus as the Promises are confirm'd and convey'd by Jesus Christ, so the Faith of his real Members is, as it should be exercised about them *as ratified, and given to them in him.* They were given to them in him in Eternity, before the World began. Which in 2 TIM. i. 9. the Apostle Paul calls there, *God's Purpose and Grace, which was given in Christ before the World began.* And as they were given in him before Time, so they are now confirm'd by his Blood, which is therefore call'd, MAT. xxvi. 28. *The Blood of the New Testament, or New Covenant.* And they are in him (as was hinted above) *Yea and Amen*; that is firm and irreversible to all that are true Believers, *whether they be weak or strong*: For in this Sense, they are all one in Christ Jesus, and so there is no Difference between them, as to their Right to the Promises in him; for he being theirs, the Promises are also theirs, in and by him; and they may claim them as such.

The weak Believer cannot indeed so easily apply the Promises unto himself, and take in the Comfort of them, as the strong Believer can. His Fears and Doubts about his Interest in them, - will not let him do so; but tho' at present he questions his Interest in them, yet they are his thro' Christ Jesus, in whom he believes; and so far as he can see this, he may and can say, they are his, for Christ and the Promises go together: *All Things are your,* (says the Apostle Paul) 1 COR. iii. 22. *Things present, and Things to come.* But how, might they say, are they so in ver. 23. He answers, *for ye are Christ's*, i. e. you have and hold all in him as your Head, and he being yours, and you his, you have a Right to all the Good of the Promises in him, and may say by Right, *thro' him*, they are mine. This (Sirs) is the happy Condition of all real Believers in Christ, the weak as well as the strong; and O how precious must that Faith be, tho' weak, which Interests thole that have it in the great and precious Promises of the Covenant of Grace, as well as a strong Faith does, which Promises to them both are as the *sure Mercies of David*; that is, as sure as those made to Christ; meant in ISAIAH. lv. 3. by *David*. But

Thirdly, They are both this Way interested in the same precious Privileges, the one as well as the other. And that it is thus, appears from this, that the Holy Scriptures *make no Difference as to them*, between a strong and a weak

Faith

Faith that is true: *The Salvation of the Gospel belongs*, we read in ROM. i. 16. *to all that believe*; which includes in it all the great and precious Privileges of it, from the Beginning of their Faith here, to the Top-Stone of Glory in Heaven.

If you ask me what these great Gospel Privileges are, which all true Believers are interested in by their Faith in Christ Jesus? I answer briefly they are,

First, Pardon of Sin.

Secondly, Justification, and so a Freedom from Condemnation.

Thirdly, Adoption to be the Children of God.

Fourthly, Sanctification, Reconciliation and Acceptance with God, &c. And,

Fifthly, The crowning of all at last with Glorification in the World above.

Now all these great Privileges are ascrib'd to Faith in the holy Scriptures, and they are said there to come by it, and why should they be attributed to Faith there, but to let us know that where true Faith is, Believers are all interested in them as theirs, the weak as well as the strong.

As to the First, *Remission of Sins*, we read in ACTS x. 43. *That to him, that is Jesus Christ, spoken of in the former Verse, gave all the Prophets witness, that through his Name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive the Remission of Sin.*

As to the Second, *Justification*, and so a Freedom from Condemnation, we read in the fore-quoted ACTS xiii. 39. *That all who believe in Christ, are justified from all Things;* and in ROM. v. 1. We read that *being justified by Faith, they have Peace with God, thro' our Lord Jesus Christ;* and in Chap. viii. 1. We are told that *there is now no Condemnation to them that are in Christ.* Condemnation signifies to be condemn'd, as all that die in a State of Unbelief with *Cain* and *Judas*, and the whole Body of final Unbelievers. But all such as do believe in Christ, are freed from this, they are *now passed from Death unto Life, and so there shall be no Condemnation to them at Death.* JOHN v. 24.

As to the Third, *Adoption* to be the Children of God, we read in GAL. iii. 26. That all who are the Children of God, are so by *Faith in Christ Jesus;* and in JOHN i. 12. we read, that *as many as receive Christ, to them he gives Power, or the Privilege or Prerogative Royal to become the Sons of God, even to as many as believe in his Name, tho' it be but by a weak Faith,* for that is there intended as well as a stronger; even such a Faith as may seem to be rather Unbelief than Faith. MARK ix. 24. *Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief.* Thus as the least Bud draws Sap from the Root, as well as the strongest Branch; so this Privilege belongs to weak Believers as well as to them that are stronger in Faith.

I believe (said one on his Death-Bed) with a weak Faith, but yet, added he, it is Faith, which is now my Comfort. As a weak Hand may receive a Gift of great Worth, so a weak Faith, or Persons weak in Faith, are joint Possessors of this amazing Privilege of Sonship; and *being Children by Faith in Christ Jesus, they are all Heirs of God, and Joint-Heirs with Christ.* ROM. viii. 17.

As to the Fourth Privilege I mentioned, *Sanctification*; this also is theirs who are true, tho' weak Believers: For it is ascribed to the same Principle, in ACTS xv. 9. where we read that the *Gentiles* had their Heart *purified by Faith*. As Faith purifies, so it purifies the Heart, as well as reforms the Life. It is always (more or less) purging away Corruption or Sin in the Heart, where it is, as you there read, *purifying their Hearts by Faith*. Thus Reconciliation and Acceptance with God, belong to them where true Faith is. ROM. v. 1. compared with PHIL. i. 6.

The Fifth Privilege, *viz.* The crowning of all at last with *Glorification* in Heaven: This also is ascribed to Faith, in JOHN iii. 15, 16. We read there, *that whosoever believeth in Christ, shall not perish, but have everlasting Life.*

They are all intitled to it, the weak as well as the strong; and thus *the Inheritance among the Saints in Light*, is said to be *by Faith in Christ*, in ACTS xxvi. 18. As the Joy of
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the Lord here, does (less or more) enter into them by Faith in Christ, ROM. xv. 13. So by the same Principle in him, they do and shall enter into that when they shall here have done with Time. As they have all a Right to it, so they shall all be possessed of it. JOHN iii. 36.

This leads me to a Fifth Particular, to shew that the Faith of the weakest Believer, is as precious a Faith, as the Faith of the strongest, and that is *in Regard of the End of it, which will be the same to the former as to the latter*; for as they both tend to the same End, so they will both issue in the same. Now what this End of true Faith will be, we read 1 PET. i. 9. where the Apostle tells us, it will be the Salvation of the Soul, *receiving* (says he) *the End of your Faith, even the Salvation of your Souls*; where, by Souls, he means, the whole Persons of Believers, both Bodies and Souls; for they are both to be saved, as the Tendency, Scope, and End of their Faith here. Tho' they may not all have the same Degree of Glory in Heaven, yet they are all to be with Christ there, that they may behold his Glory. As he purchased this for all of them, by his precious Blood when here; so it is now his Prayer and Will in Heaven, *that they should all be with him there, to behold and enjoy his Glory*. JOHN xvii. 24. They are all committed to Christ's Care, and they are all as near to him *by a vital Union*, the weak as well as the

the strong; and therefore they shall all receive the End of their Faith in him, *viz. Compleat and eternal Salvation.*

In a Word, as their Faith terminates upon Christ, or is built upon him, as the Gospel reveals him, *i. e.* as a great, and the only Saviour of lost Sinners; so they shall not be confounded. ROM. ix. 33. but be all of them saved, *with an everlasting Salvation, World without End*, as it is expressed in ISA. xlv. 17. But thus much shall suffice to shew you in what Respects the Faith of the weakest Believer, that is a true Believer, is as precious a Faith as the Faith of the strongest.

And it is thus, you have heard, *First*, with Respect to the Donor of it, God.

Secondly, With Respect to the Objects of it, God in Christ, and Christ as the great God and our Saviour in our Nature.

Thirdly, With Respect to the Means by which it is wrought in the Hearts of Sinners; and they are, the Word instrumentally, and the holy Spirit's Energy, efficiently.

Fourthly, It is thus, as it interests them in the same Persons, Promises and Privileges.

And *lastly*, in Regard of the End to both, namely, the Salvation of their Souls, that is, of their whole Persons, for *he that believes*, we read, *shall be saved*, *viz.* the weakest as well as the strongest Believer.

I shall now, in the last Place, as was proposed, make some Remarks upon what has been said. And

And First, I would remark to you, *that Persons may be in a justified and saved State, tho' their Faith at present be but weak.*

The Apostle Peter, here writ to them that had like precious Faith with himself, &c. for Kind, tho' not for Degree; and so they were *in as good and safe State for Heaven*, as he himself, and the rest of the Apostles were. And as he design'd by this, to comfort their Souls, *in their dispersed Condition*, so I have made this Remark to encourage and comfort you whose Faith at present may be weak. And there is a great deal of Comfort in it; for as it is not the Strength of Faith that saves, but the Truth of it, so it is not the Weakness of Faith that damns, but the Want of it. And therefore, as it is said, *he that believes, without saying, he that has a strong Faith, shall be saved.* So it is said, *he that believeth not, shall be damned*; and not he that has a weak Faith, in the fore-quoted MARK xvi. 16. As a little Water, is Water, as well as the Ocean, tho' not so much, but far less, so a weak Faith taking hold on Christ, *draws spiritual Sap from him*: And thus Persons are justified and saved; not for the *Worth* nor *Greatness* of their Faith, but by Jesus Christ, who is laid hold on and received by *a weak Faith*, as well as by a *strong one*.

In a Word, as all that looked of Old *on the brazen Serpent*, were healed; they that looked *with a weak Eye*, as well as those who
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looked *with a stronger*; so it is here. JOHN iii. 14, 15. And it must be theirs, because the least *Degree* of Faith, is Faith, and it lays hold on the same Object that a strong Faith does, *the Lord Jesus Christ*. And thus it justifies and saves, not for the *Worth* nor *Greatness* of it, but with Respect to the Object it lays hold on.

Comfort your selves then, *dear Souls*, with this, whose Faith at present may be but weak, *i. e.* That your Faith that lays hold on Christ, is as precious, and saves as *safely*, tho' not so comfortably, as the Faith of the strongest Christian. But,

Secondly, I would remark to you, *tho' your weak Faith be as precious as the Faith of those that are stronger therein, yet you must not rest satisfied therewith, but endeavour in the Use of Gospel Means, to grow from a weak to a strong Faith.*

This is required of you, *to grow in Grace* and so *in Faith*, and in the Knowledge of God in Christ Jesus. 2 PETER iii. 18. If any of you should say, that since a weak Faith is so precious *and useful* (as has been said it is) there is little or no *Necessity* to look after a strong one. To this I answer in Four Particulars briefly, and desire they may be *consider'd* by you. And,

First, Consider as an Answer, that tho' none have been, are, nor shall be *rejected* for their weak Faith, where it has been and is true, yet

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they have been *reproved* for it by Jesus Christ, and that *Reproof* being left upon *Record*, it stands in *the Word* as a *Reprehension* to all that do and shall rest therein. The *Reproof* you have recorded in *MATT. viii. 26. Why are ye fearful, O ye of little Faith.* Tho' our Lord did not there *reject* his Disciples because their Faith was small, but own'd they were *Believers*, yet you see he *reproved* them for it.

If you ask me why he did so, I answer in a few Words, because he having been with them for some Time, and they had seen *great Things* done by him, and had *heard great Things* from him, their Faith might and should have been much *stronger* than it was: And thus, as it is a *Reproach* to have a little Faith after *great Means*, or where much Means are enjoyed, (as it was with them) there such Persons are *worthy* of *Reproof*, for their *Non-Improvement* of them to *increase* their Faith.

But *Secondly*, Consider, tho' a weak Faith, or a weak Believer, do and shall get to Heaven, yet it will be with *greater Difficulty* than those that are stronger, especially if they meet with great Trials in their Way thither. We read of some, *REV. vii. 14. that went to Heaven through great Tribulations.* And what Troubles you may meet with in your Passage through this World to Glory, you know not; and because *great Trials* require *great Faith* to endure them as Christians should do, with *Patience, Resignation, and Perseverance*, you should

should not content your selves with a *small* Faith, a *strong* Faith has some Times been put almost quite to a Stand, under some Difficulties, what then must a *weak* Faith be? As a Child cannot bear or carry the *Burdens* a Man can do, no more can a *weak* Faith bear up under the *heavy* Trials of Life, with that Comfort which a *strong* Faith can endure with Chearfulness, and rejoice in them. ROM. v. 3.

But *Thirdly*, Let us consider the more we grow in Faith, the more we shall grow in *Peace and Joy* in our Souls, as it is by Faith, *Peace and Comfort from God*, come in there. ROM. xv. 13. So the *stronger* our Faith is, the *greater* will be our *Peace and Joy*.

We read 1 PET. i. 8. of *rejoicing with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory, thro' Believing in Christ*. And since it is thus, if we would walk in the *Light of God's Countenance*, and have his *Joy* to be our *Strength*, it should be our *Care and Desire to grow* in the Faith we hope we have. But once more,

Fourthly, To stir up myself and you to grow in Faith, let us consider, that the *stronger* it is the *greater* Glory we shall bring to God, as it is said of *Abraham*, ROM. iv. 20. *He being strong in Faith, gave Glory to God*. So shall we do, the *more strong* we are therein, and because his *Glory* should lie *near* our Hearts, and be the principal *Mark* we aim at here, we should *therefore endeavour to grow* in our Faith; and pray frequently with the *Disciples*,

Lord *increase* our Faith. LUKE xvii. 15. *Obj.* But methinks I hear, some poor Soul say, how can I *grow in that* which I have not? I answer it must be acknowledg'd, that thou *canst not grow in that* which thou hast not; but pray, (dear Soul) how *camest thou to know* thou hast no Faith? It was not *always* thus with thee, thou canst, I am persuaded, *remember the Time* when thou *thoughtest* thou hadst Faith, as many *have and do now think*, and yet they have no *true* Faith in Christ, but they are like SIMON MAGNUS, *still in the Gaul of Bitterness and Bond of Iniquity*. What hath *made* thee now think thou hast no Faith, whereas thou *once thoughtest* thou hadst? From whence came this *Change of Opinion* of thyself, once to be *rich and full, and increased with Goods, and stood in Need of Nothing* in thine own *Conceit*, like the *Laodiceans*; but now thou seest thyself *to be poor and naked, and wretched and miserable*. REV. iii. 17. And art *crying out* with Concern of Soul, thou hast no Faith.

To me it appears, that Sin hath been made *to revive in thee*, and thou art made, like Paul, *to die in thy former Conceit of thyself*. ROM. vii. 9.

Thus the holy Spirit *begins* with Persons, where he *works* Faith: Yet, he (less or more) *humbles* them under a *Sense of Sin*, and makes them *nothing* in their own *Esteem*, but Sinners, and with the penitent Publican to cry,
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God be merciful to me a Sinner. LUKE xviii.

13. And if this be thy Case, thou art not *Faithless*; because thou seekest *pardon*ing Mercy where it is to be found, as appears from PSAL. cxxxiii. 4. *If thou Lord, shouldst mark Iniquity, O Lord who shall stand?*

Is it thus with thee, dear Soul, in some Measure? Art thou *self-condemn'd* because of thy Sins? And dost thou *acknowledge* that if God should *mark* thy Sins in *strict Justice*, thou canst not stand before him without being *condemned* by him; but yet thou art persuaded, *there is Mercy and Forgiveness with him*, thro' Christ, *that he may be feared* with a Fear *consistent* with Hope, as it follows in Ver. 5. And thus thou art *pleading* for Mercy in him, with some *Degree* of Hope to meet with it for his Sake, tho' not for any *Worthiness* in thee.

I say, it is thus with thee then, thou hast this *precious Faith*, and instead of *concluding* thou hast it not, thou shouldst be *thankful to God* it is thus with thee, and pray he would make it to *grow* in thy Soul. But once more.

Thirdly, I would remark to you, what *Ground* of Comfort here is for such of you who at present may have but *a little or weak Faith*: It is like *precious Faith* with theirs who are *stronger* therein: It is like for Kind tho' not for Degree (as you have heard) as a *Dram* of Gold, is Gold, as a *Wedge* of Gold is, the same for *Quality* tho' not for *Quantity*. So your Faith is as *real*, for the *Nature and*
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Quality of it, as theirs is which is *stronger*, and the *Property* of it is the same, *viz.* To lay hold on the same Object, the Lord Jesus Christ, as theirs does, he dwells in your Hearts by Faith, as he does in theirs. EPH. iii. 17. And this may comfort you, that Christ who dwells in you, will encourage and strengthen your weak Faith, being true, and the feeblest Acts thereof, tho' struggling at present with much Sin in the Remains thereof, and Darkness; till it breaks forth into an evident and active Flame. For this you have his Promise joined with his Character, in MATT. xii. 20. He shall not break the bruised Reed, nor quench the smoking Flax, till he hath brought forth Judgment unto Victory.

He will not, dear Souls, despise your Day of small Things, but he that is the Author, will be the Finisher of your Faith, and as such, you are required to look to him, and depend upon him in your Christian Race. HEB. i. 2. As he feeds all his Flock like a good Shepherd, so he carries the Lambs in his Arms, and gently leads those that are with young. ISA. xl. 11.

Take the Comfort then which this Doctrine holds forth to you, (your weak Faith is like precious Faith with others,) if you find your Hearts are brought to mourn for Sin, and to hate it as it is Sin; and to hunger and thirst after Righteousness.

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As this *Temper* of Soul, must *spring* from Faith, and other Graces *wrought* there by the holy Spirit; so Jesus Christ makes *high Account of it*, and will *cherish* it with much *Sweetness* and Love: In a Word, you are in his *Hand* with your *weak* Faith, as well as they who have a *stronger one*; and he has *given you* his Word as well as them, that he will *give to you* eternal Life, and so you shall not *perish* no more than they shall do. JOHN x. 27, 28.

Your little Faith, and other Graces *in the Use of Gospel Means*, shall (under his sweet and heavenly Influences) *spring and grow up* into full Glory; *they shall spring up into everlasting Life*. JOHN iv. 14.

Comfort your selves with these Words; the Lord help you so to do; I shall add no more, the good Lord give you an *Understanding* in all these Things. *Amen*.

F I N I S.

as precious as the strength

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Your little Faith and other Graces in the
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into full Glory; they shall spring up into
everlasting Life. John iv. 14.

Comfort your lives with these Words; the
Lord help you to do; I shall add no more;
the good Lord give you an Understanding in
all these Things. Amen.

W I N I 2